

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Our democracy depends on a truly free and diverse press and airwaves. For such a monopoly to force local stations to play such a biased political piece, this close to elections, with no preplanned rebuttal is appalling to our democratic system. The political biases of the owners cannot be allowed to force local news centers, our public source of information, to broadcast such untruthful material as news. The owners can pay for or produce what material they want, but it must be clearly identified and local stations must have the control to accept or reject it. Our whole democratic system is under threat by so called news "information" produced by biased owners. Diversity of news sources with equal and timely access to the public is the only way our wonderful system of government can continue as a democracy. Thank you.